



MEETING POLITICIANS



PHOTO COURTESY OF PASSAIC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

On February 16, PHS AP Government and Politics students participated in a press conference held by Assemblyman Gary Schaer, Mayor Hector Lora, Passaic County Sheriff Richard Berdink, and Passaic City Chief of Police Luis Guzman to announce new legislation to increase penalties of those convicted of recruiting for gangs.

Have you heard about the new changes for Passaic Schools next year?

By Lixangelys Ruiz '20

The first time that I had heard about the changes occurring for students in Passaic in the upcoming school year was when I overheard the student council president, Diana Tiburcio, talking to my friend about it in the school library.

I did not think much of it, and quickly dismissed it because I believed that these changes would not happen at all. I just thought they were rumors. The next day in my pre-calculus class, my teacher, Mrs. Savinskaya, started talking about how our high school will be split into three schools.

That is when I began to ask my teachers about it and then shortly after, we got letters in the mail about the changes. For a while, many people, including teachers, were confused about the new educational plan. Even now, many people do not have a clear understanding of the changes that will take place in the Passaic educational system. This is what is going to happen next year:

The following schools are going to be serving students Kindergarten-Grade 8.

- School 1
 - School 2
 - School 9
 - School 3
 - School 5 (and School 5 annex)
 - School 6
 - School 7
 - School 19
 - School 8 (and School 8 annex)
 - School 10 (and School 10 annex)
 - School 11
- The following schools will become early childhood centers:
- School 15 (and School 15 annex)
 - School 16

The Redesign of Passaic High School: (see graphic on page 2)

- Each school will have its own Principal and Assistant Principals
- Students can apply to all three schools. Board rules will decide which students are selected into which schools.

- A "High School Selection Brochure" will be provided for students and our community

- All three schools have AP and Dual Enrollment classes

- Students will have the option of having 10 periods of classes in each school

- Bilingual and Special Education classes will be offered at each of the three schools

The PHS Marching Band and Athletics:

- Will perform and compete under the Passaic High School banner

Clubs and Programs:

- Each school will have its own choir

- Each school will have its own play/ theatre program

Here is what YOU can do to be involved:

- Talk with the student council. They usually meet each week on Tuesdays, after school.

- Here is what the student council president, "Tibs," had to say: "We're anticipating good results from this change because Passaic kids have always seemed to adapt to changes that come our way, and that the student council will tell everyone the latest news once we have that meeting."

- The student council e-board is going to have a meeting about the next year's plan. Ask them about it. Be involved!

- Ask staff members. They are here to help you and answer questions, or to help you find the answer to your questions as well.

Here are some opinions from some of our teachers!

Mr. Meltzer (Interact Club Advisor and geometry teacher):

"Club Interact is a small but mighty club that serves the youth of our community through our visits to #3 school. Next year I would like to be able to work with students from each of the three high schools. I do not know how clubs will operate next year. Perhaps we will have co-advisors and/or assistant advisors in each school."

Mrs. Benedetti (English teacher):

"I am very excited about the upcoming changes for the Passaic School District. I feel as though the changes will provide more opportunities for students to earn college credits and certifications in a field of study that interests them. Also, students will be able to gain experience and determine if they wish to pursue a particular concentration as a career or as a major in college. All of these factors will better prepare students for the increased competition in the workforce and in college admissions."

Ms. Huze (History teacher):

"I believe that the changes for next year are positive. I have heard others say negative comments about these changes but I believe they are fueled by apprehension about change overall. PHS is overcrowded and creating two new schools will alleviate this problem. Class sizes will decrease enabling more personalized student support, encouraging more student successes. Each school will focus on different pathways, which will support students' strengths while still meeting the standard course requirements for the state."

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Winter Concert adds marching band gig

By Luis Morales '19, Brandon Cisneros '19 and Juliana Disla '20

Passaic High School hosted their first concert of the year involving the strings, choir and band on December 14, 2017. Musicians of our school and community shared their talent throughout the night performing various compositions of songs.

Teachers Mr. Rusca, Ms. Gauthier, Ms. Ruscewicz and Ms. Godovanik lead the students in preparing and executing a fantastic performance.

The orchestra played songs such as "Inverno" by Antonio Vivaldi and "Ding Dong Merrily On High" by Vince Gassi.

Junior, Aleyshka Barbosa, who attended the concert, described it as "joyful" and "delightful."

A heartfelt moment occurred when the choir brought back graduates of Passaic High School to sing along to a couple of songs during the night.

The band closed the night by opening up the concert with a performance by the marching band. Although not very common to have the marching band perform at the winter concerts, it made it an even more spectacular night for the band and everyone who came out to support. The band performed songs such as "First Noel," "Sleigh Ride," and "Carol the Bells" as well as their nationally acclaimed performance from this fall.

Overall, the winter concert was a night to remember and many more should consider attending the next concert at Passaic High School this upcoming spring!

Safety in schools debate renewed in aftermath of Florida school shooting

By Divya Rana '21 and Armando Martinez '19

On February 14, a vicious gunman opened fire at a high school located in Parkland, Florida, leaving 17 dead and forcing other students to hide and run for their lives. Law enforcement officials found the suspect to be a former student at the high school who had been expelled, nineteen year old Nikolas Cruz.

Students that were hiding in closets and classrooms were left scarred and traumatized, worrying about their safety.

In 2018, 17 school shootings have occurred in the United States prior to the Parkland massacre. People worry that the situation might get worse if communities, schools, and the government do not do something to ensure their safety. Methods that are being brought up are

gun control and safety precautions, school security, and mental health counseling for troubled teens.

Authorities also found indicators on social media about the shooting that led them to realize that some students were aware of the possible warning but chose to brush it off and ignore it. As students, it is important to do your part. If you see something, say something because schools cannot afford to have their students and staff to get harmed at the cost of an individual's silence.

Passaic High School is notorious for its lengthy and erratic morning checks which consist of a casual bookbag check and a quick pass with a metal detecting wand. It has been a way of detecting anything strange and alerting the security guards early in the

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Black History Month Feature: Maya Angelou

By Aleyshka Barbosa '19

Born Marguerite Annie Johnson, Maya Angelou is a renowned poet, singer, memoirist, and civil rights activists. Her words are forever remembered by those that knew of all the great things she brought to this world, from April 4, 1928 – May 28, 2014.

Angelou published seven autobiographies, three books of essay, several books of poetry, as well as being a part of movies, plays, and television shows. She was a role model who recorded and celebrated the experience of being Black in the United States.

She is best known for her seven autobiographies that focused on her childhood and her poetry that continually shapes the life of others. On



WIKIMEDIA

Maya Angelou reciting her poem "On the Pulse of Morning" at President Bill Clinton's inauguration in 1993.

this month, we remember those that have left this earth and still walk it, that have created an eternal pathway for those who will not be silenced by the col-

or of their skin or due to what society has labeled them to be. Maya Angelou was known for speaking about topics that

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Students will be able to apply to 2 new schools for Sept. 2018

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"We are living in a constantly evolving world and in order to meet its demands we must prepare at an earlier age. We no longer have the leisure of waiting until our third year of college to choose a possible direction for our lives. By choosing a pathway in middle or high school students are prepared earlier for our high demanding society. Even if students ultimately change their minds, having direction is preparation in and of itself.

"I am excited about these changes. I will be affected in several ways-- I may move buildings or be required to teach different courses-- but I will embrace these changes and use them to help me be a better teacher for the students of my hometown, Passaic."

Here are some opinions from some students!:

• "I believe that the plans for the school system that will begin next year are unorganized. Students are not given any information on how the system will work and what programs are available to them. Where will AP classes take place? What are the graduation requirements? How many credits are needed to graduate? What are the school hours? What grade levels are available in each school? The answer to the questions are still unclear and there are few months until students have to decide which school they will apply to.

"I believe that the opinions of students were not at all considered in this decision. In fact, most students are upset at this new school system. This has ultimately caused confusion for the students as to how the high schools will function. As a student, this new system will create a couple of obstacles because I will not be able to participate in certain activities that

I am interested in because they will be in other schools. Additionally, this will limit students to studying only one career field, rather than exposing them to multiple options. Overall, I believe this system limits the students' learning experiences."

— Madeline Urena

• "I believe that the plans for next year will ultimately lead Passaic on the right path to achieving the Vision, Mission, and Focus of Passaic which is 'Passaic Public Schools will become the best urban school system in New Jersey. Passaic Public Schools will provide an excellent education that prepares our students for college and to earn high paying jobs. Passaic Public Schools will provide all students the opportunity to graduate high school with a career certification and/or a minimum of 15 college credits.' With these new academies opening up, one geared towards stem which is Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and the other for the Arts, I feel that we are progressing.

"With the opening of these two schools of course the original Passaic High School hallways will be less crowded. As a PHS student this is something I am extremely happy about. Nobody likes getting pushed in those hallways when you're trying to get to class, am I right? But there still is the question about AP courses. Will the same AP courses that are offered in the original building travel with the people that do decide to go to the academy?"

"How will the classes be structured? What grades will this school be offered to? The schools I believe are a very good idea but very limited and students are torn between what to do. For example you want to go to the Arts academy but you are in ROTC and that stays in

Passaic Preparatory Academy:

252 Boulevard
(Lincoln Middle School)

- 900 students*
- Grades 6 through 12*
- AP classes
- Dual enrollment college courses
- Classes on academics and arts
- Programs: Humanities, visual arts, musical arts, dramatic arts, journalism, AP Capstone Research and Seminar

* For the 2018-2019 school year, there will only be 750 students per school due to students grades 6-11 attending.

Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering:

291 Lafayette Avenue
(Lincoln Middle School)

- 900 students*
- Grades 6 through 12*
- AP classes
- Dual enrollment college courses
- Advanced science
- Technology
- Engineering
- STEM courses
- Programs: Advanced mathematics, biomedical science, biotechnology, data analysis, computer science, engineering

Passaic High School

170 Paulison Avenue

- Grades 9-12
- AP classes
- Dual enrollment college courses
- Career pathways
- Is an AVID school
- Opportunities to graduate with 15 college credits and/or career certification
- Programs: radio and television, health sciences, education, NAF Finance Academy, Automotive Engineering, Information Technology, Building Trades, NJROTC, Criminal Justice and Public Safety

HILLTOP STAR GRAPHIC

This graphic shows how students will be placed in one of three locations for next school year, depending on their interests and their future goals.

the main building. You're making the student decide between these two things they like. But overall I am extremely happy to see the progression of the Passaic Public Schools System and when I am a senior I can't wait to see what awaits that round of freshmen."

— Elisa Matos

After reading these opinions... How do you feel? What are some questions that you have? Think about which school is best for you and how to make the best of it. Talk about it, think about it.

Common questions that we all most likely have:

- How will clubs work next year?
- Will there be three separate classes graduating each year, or will the students that graduate in the same year from each school, be considered one class?
- How will clubs such as National Honors Society work next

year? Will each school have an NHS club?

• Will each of the three schools have the same clubs?

• Will the class of 2019 (juniors in 2018) have to stay in Passaic High School? (This has been a popular statement that many have heard)

• Will the graduation requirements be the same for each high school?

Advice and Conclusion:

I advise all high school students to begin thinking about which school they would like to attend. Go where YOU want to go, and don't let anyone else make the choice for you. If you do not like the changes, or agree with them, try to see how these changes can benefit you and how you can work around the things you do not like. I will admit, that I did not like the new plan in the beginning. However, after doing more research on it, I realized that it was not so bad.

Make sure that you stay informed and updated about possible new information. Ask your peers that are in the student council, teachers, your principals, etc. I believe that they should try their best to keep us informed as well to avoid confusion (I suggest an assembly/presentation for students and parents). However, don't stress! Just simply think about which option is best for you and go with the flow.

Many people have faith in this plan, including the Board

of Education's Vice President, Peter T. Rosario. He stated, "As the parent of a graduate of Passaic High School, I have been vocal in my belief that our students will succeed if we, as a City and a Board of Education, make the right decisions. This is a true transformation of our school system that will place our students on the right path toward success in their college and career choices after high school."

All of our questions will be answered in time, and maybe the changes will not be so drastic after all. On the bright side, Passaic High School will no longer be extremely crowded. I do admit that I will miss the crowded halls of Passaic High.

Sources and where the plan comes from:

The plan for next year is called, "Becoming the Best"

<http://passaicschools.org/becoming-the-best-district-realignment-information/>

The plan for the changes was approved by the Board of Education on November 20, 2017. The Board of Education has provided resources about the plan on the Passaic Public Schools Website, but most people (including myself) were not aware of it! Be sure to check it out! Find out more on the Passaic Public Schools website (Check out the "Celebrating our Success, Planning our Future" pdf. Here you will be able to examine our academic statistics and more.

Black History Month

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many may never be able to grasp or fully put into words.

As linguist John McWhorter of The New Republic said in regards to her life, "Angelou's life has certainly been a full one: from the hardscrabble Depres-

sion era South to pimp, prostitute, supper club chanteuse, performer in Porgy and Bess, coordinator for Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference, journalist in Egypt and Ghana in the heady days of decolonization,

comrade of Malcolm X, and eyewitness to the Watts riots. She knew King and Malcolm, Billie Holiday, and Abbey Lincoln." In 2010, Barack Obama awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The Human Family

by Maya Angelou

I note the obvious differences in the human family.

Some of us are serious, some thrive on comedy.

Some declare their lives are lived as true profundity, and others claim they really live the real reality.

The variety of our skin tones can confuse, bemuse, delight, brown and pink and beige and purple, tan and blue and white.

I've sailed upon the seven seas and stopped in every land, I've seen the wonders of the world not yet one common man.

I know ten thousand women called Jane and Mary Jane, but I've not seen any two who really were the same.

Mirror twins are different although their features jibe, and lovers think quite different thoughts while lying side by side.

We love and lose in China, we weep on England's moors, and laugh and moan in Guinea, and thrive on Spanish shores.

We seek success in Finland, are born and die in Maine. In minor ways we differ, in major we're the same.

I note the obvious differences between each sort and type, but we are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.

Skiers and boarders travel to Mountain Creek to practice

By Diana Cruz '21

On Thursday, January 25, the members of the Ski and Board Club here at PHS traveled to Mountain Creek in Vernon, New Jersey to learn how to snowboard and ski.

The group took a bus to Mountain Creek after school and came back at 10 p.m.

The advisors of the club are Ms. Lauricella and Mr. Devries, and the chaperones of this trip were Ms. Sciametta, Ms. Bang, and Ms. Yildirim.

It was the first time skiing and snowboarding for the majority of the students who went on the trip, making it more fun and challenging.

Not all mountains are available for night skiing, so Mountain Creek was the obvious choice for an after school trip.

The club advisers hope that the weather gets a little colder before spring so that they can go on one last trip this season.

"I recommend that everyone try out skiing or snowboarding at least twice in their life. The first time is very difficult, but after that, it gets a lot easier and more fun! You can't get discouraged if you aren't going down black diamond trails on the first day" said Ms. Sciametta.

"This was my first time skiing. It was really difficult at first, but I think I improved and I can't wait to go again!" said student Damaris Ramirez.



PHOTO BY MS. BANG
The Ski and Board club had an amazing time on the slopes at Mountain Creek.

Variety marks Club Fair

By Aleyshka Barbosa '19

On October 30, 2017, PHS Clubs were given the opportunity to show students what their clubs are all about. The club fair took place in the Auxiliary Gym and lasted all day.

Organizers were Mr. Graham and Ms. Ament, who went above and beyond to make sure that every club had a chance to show what they are about.

Students were all given the opportunity to go and explore the different clubs, that had all set up tremendous tables all special to the club's focus. Students were able to go during their lunch and gym/naval science periods. There was never a languid moment.

Although, the students did grow weary after a few periods of moving around and promoting their clubs; they smiled and laughed the whole day and never showed anything less than love and passion for their club. Each club had something different to offer all students that came, and those interested received all the information they might have needed including meeting dates and the

club's focus and activities.

Throughout the day guests such as the principal and assistant principals, and even some members of the Board of Education, came to the gym and walked around, asking the students questions and giving them compliments on their outstanding work.

All the clubs at the fair did their best in putting together a successful event:

- Girls Who Code
- Environmental Science Club
- SHPE
- NJROTC
- Color Guard/Marching Band
- Student Council
- Choir/Glee Club
- National Honor Society
- DECA
- The Art Club
- No H8 Club
- Japanese Culture Club
- STRIVE
- Octagon Club/Junior Optimists
- HOSA
- Lead for Diversity
- Newspaper Club
- Ski & Board Club
- Future Educators
- Interact Club
- Ad Astra!



Drill Team at the Club Fair.



Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)

PHOTOS BY MS. SCIAMETTA

Hamilton Reflection: An Unforgettable Experience

By Armando Martinez '19

On December 6, 2017, Passaic High School students that take the Advanced Placement United States History 2 course got the opportunity of a lifetime, in watching the historic play *Hamilton* at the Richard Rodgers Theatre in New York City.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute made a special donation to the school, paying for all of the students tickets, and staff who went along to chaperone. The only fee students had to pay, was to create a two-minute performance inspired by Alexander Hamilton's legendary life.

A group of Passaic High School teachers judged the performances, that ranged from raps and poems to songs and skits. The lucky winners were Vincent Sposato, Daisy Gonzalez and Ellenie Berhe, who got to perform their skit at the Richard Rodgers Theatre, in front of not only students from Passaic High School, but stu-

dents from other schools in the city, and New Jersey.

As I entered Richard Rodgers Theatre, I went in thinking I knew all there was to know about the great legacy of Alexander Hamilton, but I was pleasantly surprised there was more to the "bastard." Watching the *Hamilton* play only enriched my knowledge on one of our founding fathers.

Hamilton was the type of person to give up everything, to keep his honest man image that he created for himself. He'd rather spill his own dirty laundry to the world, than have someone hold it against him. As triumphant as Hamilton was in his political life, he had several faults in his personal life.

Hamilton didn't comprehend the meaning of family, which may be due to his tumultuous childhood. His ambition always put him between a rock and a hard place. In the scene "That Will Be Enough," the audience can see how Hamilton

had an internal conflict within himself, whether to keep on moving up or settling down.

Eliza Schuyler Church, his wife, represents staying at home, and Angelica, his implied lover, represents continuing to move up the ladder of power. His other issue were with the women in his life, by having an affair with Maria Reynolds, and his flirtatious relationship with Angelica Schuyler Church.

Even though Alexander Hamilton was a man with great ambition who left an unmatched legacy, it was at the cost of his personal life.

I would like to give a special thanks to Mrs. Welch and Mr. Newman for all of their hard work, in preparing this amazing experience for my peers and me. Thank you to Mr. Wierzbicki for being excellent AP US History teacher, and an amazing chaperone on the trip, as well as the other staff members who tagged along, and showed their support.

Passaic Octagon Club/ Junior Optimist Updates

By Maria Galicia '19 and Damaris Ramirez '19

Bagging for Bucks:

On December 16, the Octagon Club, directed by Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Dudek, hosted a fundraiser that lasted more than a week. The Octagon Club members gathered together and bagged groceries for Passaic residents at ShopRite on Paulison Ave. Through their hard work and dedication, the Octagon Club was able to raise money for future scholarships and events. Yet the Octagon Club did not stop there. They also recruited the PHS cheerleaders, Ski and Board club, and the NJROTC to help out with this community fundraiser.

Gift of Giving:

The Octagon Club once again gathered together to bring joy to the children and bring a smile to their face. The Octagon Club initiated a charity event on December 20, the Gift of Giving. The Gift of Giving is an initiative that was started by Passaic BOE employee Germaine Gibson. It is a city wide



PHOTO BY KIARA RIVERA

Gift of Giving event

program that introduces sponsors to less fortunate children in Passaic. The Junior Optimist Club (Octagon) partnered with The Passaic Optimist Club and they have been sponsoring multiple children each year. This year they sponsored 20 children that live in The Speer Village Housing Projects ranging between ages of 6 and 13. The members of the Octagon Club raised the money, purchased and wrapped the gifts.

National History Day

By Divya Rana '21

Every year, National History Day (NHD) provides students with a frame of research topics within a historical theme. It engages both the students and teachers, by allowing them to develop their skills in historical research, critical thinking, and interviewing. It creates a deeper understanding and appreciation for history. This year's theme is "Conflict and Compromise in History" and students have the option to do an exhibit, documentary, paper, performance, or a website.

Ms. Huze, an AP U.S. History teacher, and Mr. Velez, an AP World History teacher have teamed up to lead the team of students to the competition with high hopes for winning. Melissa Reyes, an NHD club member, states "I hope to improve my cooperation and learning skills at the event and since I know all of the rules because I lost last time, this year will be different."

Last year, Ms. Huze took a group of students to the competition and two of the students were able to go to the state com-

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Teamwork helps bowlers win victories — and have fun

By Janessa Mejias '19

Passaic High School's Bowling team is striking this season. The boys and girls bowling teams, coached by Mr. Maisonet and Mr. Vogas, made it to the state tournaments. The boys team competed on February 1 at Lodi Lanes with top scoring members such as captain Michael Polanco and Nino Polanco. The girls team also got their chance to compete at states on Saturday, February 10 at Bowler City with top bowlers Ashley Tepale and the captain Jocelyn Martinez.

One of the biggest challenges for the team, according to Tepale, "was trying to keep each other up when one person's mood came down."

However, both boys and girls were supportive towards each other's teams. "Everyone in the team supported each other. The girls would cheer the guys on during their big games like States, or just a regular game. The guys would do the same for us. Michael and Nino are the loudest cheerers on the team!" Tepale added.

Michael Polanco was named First Team All-County for boys and Ashley Tepale was named Second Team All-County for girls. Both were top scorers of



PHOTO BY MR. MAISONET

PHS Bowling Team

their respective teams.

Boys Varsity team members are Jesus Martinez, Allan Santos, Michael Polanco, and Nino Polanco. Girls Varsity team members are Jocelyn Martinez, Ashley Tepale, Nalleli Munoz,

and Karime Henriquez.

Some notable highlights of the season are that the team was one of only two teams to defeat the defending champs Clifton Mustangs for the boys. Also, PHS was the only girls varsity team

to beat the champions Bergen Tech in two games. This game is the only blemish on their record this year in our division.

Captain Michael Polanco said, "Our biggest accomplishment as a team this year is that even though most students were new to bowling this year, they all were able to develop skills like veterans."

Polanco and Tepale both men-

tioned their team strength and unity when speaking of their athlete peers.

"Coach and I helped the players develop skills such as moving left to right and staying focused. However, the most important part of being on the team is being able to have fun with the game and your teammates while also being dedicated and serious," said Polanco.

PHS BASKETBALL



The PHS Boys Basketball team won the majority of their games this season, with a record of 11-10 as of February 26. The boys have improved by winning six more games this season.

Captains:
Coby Sylvester, Wander Castillo, Wagner Martinez
Coaches: Mr. Slappy, Mr. Muniz

Seniors:
Anthony Paulino, Wagner Martinez, Kyle Rios, Starling Remigil, Francisco Almanzar, Justin Mangual, Wander Castillo



Girls Basketball celebrating their seventh win. Captains: Carmen Escano and Kiara Grant. Coach: Mr. Iturrino.

Check us out online.

Go to hilltopstar.com

National History Day

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petition. This year, they hope to do the same and go even further.

When asked about his goal for the program, Mr. Velez states "My goal for NHD is to learn about the process because this is my first time...I have high expectations because people who competed last year are competing again."

Hundreds of students will come together in a few months to present their choice of medium and students of Passaic High School will join them for the first time. At the end of the day, it is all about having fun while learning but, a trophy would be nice nonetheless don't you think? Wish them good luck as our very own students and teachers help influence the future by uncovering our past.



PHOTOS BY MR. ITURRINO

Seniors Kiara Grant and Gabriela Medina.

Sports Photo Album

Passaic High School Wrestling Team

Captains: Edwin Morales and William Rosenbersky
Coaches: Mr. Gouse, Mr. Hidalgo, and Mr. Smith
Senior Wrestlers: JanCarlos Betances and Samantha Pilarte

Highlights of the Season:

Edwin Morales went on a seven-win streak this season and took third place in the Clifton Tournament. "Overall I had a good season, by showing how dominant I could be. However I felt like I could've pushed myself harder, and accomplished more this season."

- Morales

William Rosenbersky placed fourth at the Passaic County Wrestling Tournament.

"We worked hard, and wrestled hard, by pushing through the mental and physical pain this sport puts upon us"

- Rosenbersky



PHS Wrestling team

PHOTO COURTESY OF EDWIN MORALES



PHS Swim team

COURTESY OF PASSAIC PUBLIC SCHOOL'S FACEBOOK PAGE

Passaic High School Swimming Team

Captains: Boys – Nestor Bonifacio, Luis Liriano, Girls – Daisy Cruz, Nicole Goicochea
Senior Swimmers: Nestor Bonifacio, Daisy Cruz, Daisy Diaz, Laura Gonzalez, Jacqueline Membreno, Laiza Fernandez Peralta, George Delgado Reyes, Axel Moyas Silvestre, and Jose Torres
Coaches: Ms. Meindl, Ms. Mendoza

Highlights:

- Girls were able to break the 200 Medley Relay Race with a 2:33:91, on Jan. 25, 2018 at the Big North Championships
- Freshman Xiomara Suarez beat the 100 backstroke with a 1:10:49, on Jan. 25, 2018 at the Big North Championships
- Freshmen Xiomara Suarez placed top 6 at Counties on Jan. 16, 2018
- Girls broke the 400 free relay, with a 4:57:51 on Jan. 25, 2018 at the Big North Championships
- Boys were able to break the 200 Medley Relay Race with a time 2:17:67 on Feb. 1, 2018 at
- Luis Lopez broke the 200 free with a time of 2:23:94 on Jan. 29, 2018
- Senior Jose Torres broke the 100 Butterfly with a time of 1:21:69 on Jan. 16, 2018
- Luis Lopez broke the 100 Free with a time of 1.01.72 on Dec. 8, 2017
- Luis Lopez broke the 500 free with the time of 6.45.30 on Dec. 13, 2017
- Boys broke the 200 Free Relay with a time of 1:55:38 on Jan. 25, 2018
- Luis Lopez broke the 100 Breaststroke with a time of 1:20:02 on Dec. 18, 2017
- Luis Lopez broke the 100 Backstroke with a time of 1:19:95 on Nov. 30, 2017

Passaic High School Winter Track and Field

First Team All-County
 Luis Peralta 400
 Manuela Caraballo All-Around

First Team All-Big North
 Luis Peralta

Second Team All-County
 Brayan Olivares

Second Team All-Big North
 Angel DeLosSantos

All-County Honorable Mention
 D'yani Donaldson
 Bintou N'doye
 Angel DeLosSantos
 Brian Pichardo

Honorable Mention
 Manuela Caraballo
 Jerry Olvera

- County Championships were at Ocean Breeze athletic complex in Staten Island NY on January 29
- Big North League Championships were January 15 at Ocean Breeze athletic complex in Staten Island NY.

Luis Peralta

- Luis won the state sectional championships on February 10 in the 400 and 800 at Toms River Bennet Center
- Luis won the state group championships on February 17 in the 800 at Toms River Bennet Center. Luis was Passaic's first group champion in 13 years.
- On February 25, Luis competed in the State League of Champions.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MR. GRANT

PHS Winter Track team member Luis Peralta competing in the State Championships.

Passaic High School Cheerleading Team

Seniors: Nathalia Severino, Bruce Ransom, Nicole Rosario, Angel Feliz, Reynaldo DeLa-Cruz, Brandon Velez, Chelsea Ceron, Lenny Rodriguez, Mena Concepcion, Jennifer Pimentel, Genesis DeLosSantos, Erika Fabian, Lorryanne Mendez, Ke'ara Benitez, Sebastian Plasencia, Wilda Taveras
Captains: Nathalia Severino, Nicole Rosario, Chelsea Ceron, Angel Feliz, Wilda Taveras, Erika Fabian
Coaches: Ms. Merced and Mr. Pena

Highlights:

- Back to back Liberty Division Champions.
- 30 cheerleaders: 17 female and 13 male.
- Over 80 Passaic fans at Kennedy HS for the Big North Championships. PHS won the competition. Mr. Rusca started a chant saying "We are PASSAIC!" with fans (and even a judge) joining in.
- PHS ended their regular season on February 25 at the Wayne Valley competition and won a first place trophy. On Sunday March 4, the team will be competing at the state competition. On March 17, for the first time in the history of PHS, the team will be attending a national cheer event in Atlantic City.



Seniors Bruce Ransom and Chelsea Ceron competing at the Impact Cheer Challenge.



PHS Cheerleaders won first place at the Impact Cheer Challenge.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MS. MERCED

'Black Panther' an amazing film

By Brandon Cisneros '19

The highly anticipated movie, *Black Panther*, was released on February 16, and the public went wild.

Not only is it an amazing film with an all-black leading cast, but according to *The New York Times*, it broke a record by selling roughly \$218 million between only Friday and Monday.

Director Ryan Coogler was given a budget of \$200 million, the most money ever given to a black director, and it is said that the movie would recoup its

money and more by the end of the week.

Black Panther is about a young prince named T'Challa, played by Chadwick Boseman, as he is crowned king of Wakanda, after the death of his father. Alongside him is an amazing cast which include Lupita Nyong'o, Danai Gurira and Letitia Wright, who help him protect the throne from outsider Erik Killmonger, played by Michael B. Jordan, who tries to take over and expose Wakanda to the world.

T'Challa must become the

Black Panther to protect his nation from evil but struggles by deciding whether to be a leader or a hero.

Black Panther is an amazing movie for everyone no matter the age. The special effects, fighting scenes, and outstanding cast makes the movie an amazing experience to share with family and friends.

Not only is it changing the film world, but it represents women's empowerment and is bringing the world together by getting many celebrities to buy theaters for kids and those



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'Black Panther' movie poster

who cannot offered to go to the theaters. Overall, this movie is and will continue to be a huge

success for many more weeks to come. Definitely a 9 out of 10 from my experience.

Kylie Jenner causes a storm on Super Bowl Sunday

By Bielka Nunez '19

The youngest of the Kardashian/Jenner clan gave birth to a baby girl on February 1st, 2018, weeks after big sister, Kim Kardashian, gave birth to hers. It has been reported that only Jenner, her family, and her closest friends knew about her pregnancy.

On her Instagram, Jenner posted a picture explaining why she kept the public in the "dark." She states that she to keep this pregnancy to herself and wanted to experience it fully in the "most positive, stress free, and healthy way" she knew how.

The E! reality star and mogul published a video on Youtube

titled "To Our Daughter" where she shows her experience of being pregnant. In the video, Jenner's best friend and Instagram model, Jordyn Woods, becomes a narrator, explaining how amazing the past nine months have been.

After a couple days of Jenner breaking the news about her daughter, she did the most obvi-

ous thing, and uploaded a picture on her Instagram account, of her daughter's hand. The caption of the photo is where she revealed the name of baby, Stormi Webster. Stormi became social media's hot topic, trending all over.

Although Jenner may be 20 years old, she seems to have everything under control. With a

net worth of \$50 million, and a cosmetics line on its way to be worth 1 billion dollars, she will be okay. Not only does Jenner have financial stability, she also has the support from her big sisters, two mothers, and a plethora of nannies. It takes a village to raise a baby, and it takes an army to raise a Kardashian.

High-end fashion meets streetwear

By Bryan Castro '19

The renowned English fashion designer, Kim Jones, is stepping down as the men's artistic director for the French fashion house, Louis Vuitton, with his last 2018 Autumn/Winter Menswear show in Paris.

With Off-White dominating the scene of 2018 Autumn/Winter Menswear show, the 36-year-old founder, Virgil Abloh, showcased yet another collaboration with Nike on the Air Jordan 1 and the Nike Air Force One's.

The theme of the collection was business casual, ranging between tailoring and streetwear.

During an interview with *The Guardian*, Abloh explained, "I was dictated by how a young person sees themselves in a larger narrative of traditional menswear; what does a kid who is into sneakers wear if he needs to buy something formal?"

Although the Air Forces were exclusive only to MoMa (in or-



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Nike Air Force 1 x Off-White by Virgil Abloh for MoMA.

der to celebrate the opening of *Items: "Is Fashion Modern?"*), we could expect the resale value of this shoe to be around \$2,000.

The "White" Air Jordan 1 x Off-White is another take on the "Chicago" Air Jordan 1 x Off-White which was released as part of "The Ten" in October 2017. "The Ten" consisted of 10

shoe models featuring the Off-White design that dominated the sneaker culture in late 2017. This became one of the best collaborations between a high-end fashion brand and a sport brand.

The white colorway is just as great as the "Chicago," although it's only expected to be a European release. One can only wish to own a pair!

Welcome to Jelp, where J is here to help!

Restaurant Review: The Boat House Cafe

By Janessa Mejias '19

We have recently discovered a different flavor here in town!

Business is booming at The Boat House Cafe, located in Third Ward Park, especially during track season. It is a great place for a first date. The cafe menu consists of a variety of coffees and teas, wraps, snacks, sandwiches and breakfast foods.

Atmosphere: The Boat House Cafe is a nice cozy place with indoor seating with soft music playing, along with a fireplace for the colder days. Outdoor seating is also offered with a great view of the pond. Each time going, we found the space quite comforting and worth the while.

Food: Our team tried brownies, cookies, iced lattes, hot

chocolates and chicken parmesan paninis. Their handcrafted drinks are always fresh and made to your liking. The food is freshly made right in front of you and there's no need to wait, as they bring your food right to your table!

Staff: The Boat House Cafe is full of great spirits and very patient employees. There's usually only one employee a day but no matter the number, they are always ecstatic to see people walk in. Boat House employees welcome you with a warm smile; they're extremely polite and make you want to come back with more friends the next time you are out. I highly recommend coming here even if it's just to hang out with your friends. The experience will hopefully be just as amazing and just as mellow.

Rating: 5 Stars ★★★★★

'Jumanji' remake is a game made real

By Janessa Mejias '19

One of the most famous movies of the 90's, *Jumanji*, has made a comeback, a remake with a twist.

The remake film, *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, released in theaters on December 20, 2017 stars Nick Jonas, The Rock, Karen Gillan, Jack Black and Kevin Hart.

Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle is about a group of high school students that get detention for various reasons and their punishment is to clean up an old school room full of junk. This room is where they discover the old board game from the original movie only to then decide to give it a try. Once the students pick their

avatars, the game absorbs them and they turn into the characters. At this point, it's just a fight for survival. The only way to win the game is to make it out alive.

Usually, comedies aren't too funny, they're boring or childish, but this movie will have you in a whirl of emotions. From crying of laughter to scared to crying with a pounding heart. this movie is worth your while; it's also worth the expensive popcorn and drinks.

If you're a movie person, the *Jumanji* remake would be a top pick on any list. If you're more of a show person and like binge watching for the anticipation, this movie is also one to watch. See it for yourself!



GOOGLE

Kevin Hart, Dwayne Johnson, Karen Gillan and Jack Black star in "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" as avatars for the children playing the board game.

SAVE THE DATE & BE INSPIRED!!!

Passaic Optimist
Youth Appreciation Dinner

Thursday, March 22 at 6:30 p.m.

The Sevilla Restaurant
505 Main Avenue, Passaic
Guest Speaker: Passaic H.S. graduate
and teacher, Ms. Janelly Jose

Ticket cost: \$35
Donations are accepted.
All guests can pay at the door.



"Friend of Youth Foundation"
www.passaicoptimistfoundation.org

Murphy off and running in his first term as governor

By Melissa Reyes '21

On January 16, 2018, governor elect-Phil Murphy became the governor of New Jersey after being sworn in by state Supreme Court Chief Justice Stuart Rabner.

Murphy, the 56th governor of New Jersey, took an oath under the same bible that deceased president John F. Kennedy used. Rabner also swore in Murphy's running mate, Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver.

Rabner and state officials then watched Governor Murphy deliver his inauguration address, highlighting what he planned to do with the state of New Jersey. Murphy declared how he will improve New Jersey's economy, making the state "where innovative companies are born,

and where millennials will want to live, and where seniors will want to retire."

Murphy's First Executive Order

On the same day Murphy was inaugurated, he wasted no time and signed his first executive order in front of the State Archives building. His executive order prevents government agencies in the state from asking applicants about their previous salaries from their prior professions.

An Update: Phil Murphy's Recent Executive Order

On January 23, 2018, Phil Murphy signed a controversial executive order, which allowed for more people to use medical marijuana. Although medical marijuana is legal in New Jer-

sey, it has many regulations, allowing only about 15,000 people to have access to it. This is the first step Murphy has taken, desiring to legalize marijuana in 100 days of taking office during his term as governor.

Murphy Defends DACA

Phil Murphy announced on January 24 that he will join a lawsuit with multiple states (started in September) targeting Donald Trump's decision about ending DACA. They argue how it will hurt state economies and that Trump's actions were racially motivated to discriminate against minorities, specifically Mexicans.

Murphy has expressed how he supports DACA, swearing the first Dreamer in state history to the state's bar. He later an-



FLICKR

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy

nounced on the same day that "New Jersey will have the backs of our 22,000 DREAMers even

when Washington refuses to stand up for them."

A win for DACA — temporarily

By Melissa Reyes '21

The Trump Administration had recently announced that DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) will be ending on March 5th. However Judge William Alsup blocked president Donald Trump's efforts to shut down DACA, by allowing the program to accept renewal applications on January 9th. DACA is an important executive order passed by former president Barack Obama in 2012 that allowed undocumented immigrants who came into the United States as children to stay.

It is important to recognize that DACA only protects those under the age of 16 that came into the country, and living in the United States since June 15, 2007.

In Passaic High School, I was given the opportunity to speak to a student who is a Dreamer (those who benefit from DACA). While the individual desires to remain anonymous for privacy reasons, I was allowed to include their testimony in composing this article. The student was recently renewed by the program, but they stated that they worry if they will be



WIKIPEDIA

Young people protesting in San Francisco in 2017.

able to renew their residency or not. The student sheds light on what it means to be a DACA student, showing how they want to contribute to American society without the fear of being deported.

While DACA may be able to stay in place so far, there is still fear lingering around about be-

ing discriminated against due to the fact they are an immigrant benefiting from the program. The program is important to the individual, the student declaring how "it gives me the opportunity to get a job and things like my license and a social number and protection for two years from getting deported."

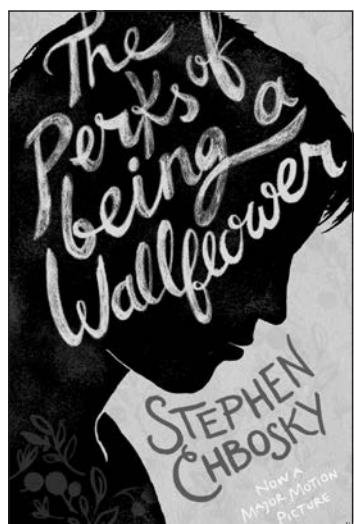
'The Perks of being a Wallflower'

A review of the novel by Stephen Chbosky

Review by Aleyshka Barbosa '19

The 2012 coming-of-age film directed by the novel's very own author, Stephen Chbosky, was an adaptation of the 1999 novel of the same name. The novel is based off the life of Charlie, a teenager who sits on the sidelines and observes everything going on around him as a wallflower does. Even so, throughout the book Charlie finds himself in a constant struggle with himself, trying to get up from the bench he has found himself trapped in with the heavy burden of anxiety and social awkwardness.

The movie, while being fantastic and having a similar captivation as the book, as many would agree, does not have the same power of making the reader feel every single emotion. No matter what grade you are in, this book will drag you to your freshman year of high school, seeing



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Book cover for The Perks of Being a Wallflower

things from a different perspective, maybe even opening your eyes to things people overlook every day.

Chbosky does an incredible job, taking the reader through the daily struggles of a teenager. If and when deciding to read this book, it is important to have

an open mind, as well as being able to read and face the serious topics the novel discusses. This book teaches the importance of speaking out and being heard, valuing every moment of your life. It teaches how to accept who you are no matter what society might think of you as, and the vital power of friendship especially during high school.

When reading this book, I was expecting the same events and outcome as the movie, but I was completely wrong. It took me two days to finish this book! I read it nonstop, my eyes glued to each page. Reading this book was as if I was on a roller coaster of emotions, never knowing when I was going up or down. When finishing the book, I was so overwhelmed with emotions that it took me a full day to fully gather my thoughts and tell my friends about it. As dubious as this may sound, this book can be a different experience for everyone, nonetheless it has captivated the mind and hearts of all who have read it.

Safety in schools

Continued from Page 1 morning about anything that is out of place. Events like the shootings in the United States have led to the school staff members and administrators to warn students at PHS to keep their eyes and ears open during school hours for suspicious or out-of-place students.

Mr. Lungren, ninth grade assistant principal at PHS works with security staff everyday. When asked about his opinions on student safety, Lungren stated, "I believe in the same things I always felt, that is not going to change. You look at a test, see a 100 and a good student will find something to do better next time and someone who scored a 90

would also do the same. [My advice to the school is] to pay attention because nothing can go well if you aren't safe. This high school has several security teams that review policies and work closely with the police on a daily basis to ensure that everyone feels safe."

To ensure the safety of students does not only call for random morning checks, but to look out for any predators that roam the halls. It is important that Passaic High School addresses these situations with the student body, not only after the recent shootings that have occurred, but with other situations that have significantly impacted the school community.



PHOTO BY MS. SCIAMETTA

Newspaper Club

THE HILLTOP STAR

The Student Newspaper of Passaic High School

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Thank you to the members of the PHS community who have contributed photographs, information, and articles to this issue of The Hilltop Star. Without your help, this publication would not exist. We look forward to working with you throughout this school year! Reach out to Ms. Sciametta or a newspaper staff member if you would like to join, contribute information, or respond to newspaper content.

www.hilltopstar.com

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Golden Globes call attention to girls and women

75th Annual Golden Globes: Most Unforgettable Moments

By Armando Martinez '19

The ceremony, hosted by talk-show host Seth Meyers, was held at The Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, and broadcasted live on January 7, 2018. This year's Golden Globes was not only to celebrate the superb actors, writers, and directors in film and television, but a commemoration of women. Many of Hollywood's elite attended the event sporting black ensembles to show encouragement towards *Time's Up Movement*. Below are the night's most unforgettable moments!

Ladies In Noir, Men in Black:

To advocate against sexual assault and offer their support towards the *Time's Up* and *#MeToo* movement, everyone who was present at the Golden Globes, wore all black, with the exception of a couple unknowns. There's a possibility that Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief of *Vogue Magazine*, might have not been so thrilled to see all



GOOGLE

Michelle Williams, left, and Tarana Burke.

black on the red carpet, but it was a display of unity. Michelle Williams, who was nominated for an award, brought the founder of the *#MeToo* organization, Tarana Burke, as her date.

Meyers Roasty Monologue:

To address the elephant in the room, late night host Seth Meyers, opened his monologue with calling out some of the industry powerhouses such as Woody Allen, and Kevin Spacey, who have been accused of sexual ha-

arrassment. He left the audience in tears. Meyers saved his biggest roast for the disgraced movie mogul, Harvey Weinstein, stating "Harvey Weinstein isn't here tonight...But don't worry, he'll be back in 20 years when he becomes the first person ever booted during the 'In Memoriam.'" Burn! Let's see if Jimmy Kimmel can top this monologue at this year's Oscars.

Oprah 2020:

After Ms. Winfrey complet-



GOOGLE

Seth Meyers hosted the 75th Annual Golden Globe Awards.

ed her acceptance speech for the Cecil B. DeMille Award for lifetime achievement, the phrase "OPRAH 2020," was trending all over social media. Wearing a custom-made black Atelier Versace gown, the star took the opportunity to inspire and address the injustices that have occurred against women and minorities. She shared a story of the recently deceased Recy Taylor, a black woman who was raped by six white men in the 1940s and whose muggers were nev-



GOOGLE

Oprah Winfrey at the Golden Globes.

er brought to justice. Winfrey ended her inciting speech with, "So I want all the girls watching here, now, to know that a new day is on the horizon! And when that new day finally dawns, it will be because of a lot of magnificent women, many of whom are right here in this room tonight, and some pretty phenomenal men, fighting hard to make sure that they become the leaders who take us to the time when nobody ever has to say "Me too" again."

60th Annual Grammy Awards: Most talked about moments

By Armando Martinez '19

The 60th Annual Grammy Awards was held on Sunday, January 28, 2018, and was broadcast live on the CBS network, from Madison Square Garden in New York City. It has been 15 years since the ceremony was held outside of the Staples Center, in Los Angeles, California.

This year music's biggest night, has had some controversy due the few awards won by women, the several artists who were snubbed, and the viewership for the ceremony dropped 24 percent compared to the previous year. Despite the night's few turnoffs, the performances by Rihanna, Bruno Mars, Kendrick Lamar, and the host, James Corden, made the show memorable. Here are some of the night's most talked about moments.



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An Unforgettable Opening: Kendrick Lamar opened the night with a revolutionary performance before winning the first award of the evening for Best Rap/Sung Performance ("LOYALTY," with Rihanna). He rapped his song "XXX," with an American flag backdrop, and soldiers marching. Lamar was joined on stage by legendary bands U2 and The Edge. His performance will go down as one of the best openings in Grammy history.



GOOGLE

Only 24 Karat Gold for Bruno: Bruno really did have an incredible night! After an incredible performance, the singer won all six of the Grammys he was nominated for, including the coveted Album of the Year. Bruno also won R&B Album, Record Of The Year for "24K Magic," Best R&B Performance, Best R&B Song and Song Of The Year for "That's What I Like."



GOOGLE

"In Living Color" with Cardi B and Bruno Mars: Singer Bruno Mars took the Grammy Stage with rapper Cardi B to perform their smash remix hit, "Finesse." The duo gave us 90s R&B and hip-hop nostalgia with their bright color ensembles, and bucket hats. #ThrowbackSunday



GOOGLE

Praying for Change: Singer and actress, Janelle Monae, introduced Kesha to the stage with a heartwarming speech that discussed the sexual harassment that has come to light, and how that will no longer be tolerated. Kesha hit the stage with the support from Cyndi Lauper, Camila Cabello, Bebe Rexha, Julia Michaels, and Andra Day, who did background vocals. There wasn't a dry eye in sight.



YOUTUBE

Corden's Subway Karaoke: The host of the night, James Corden, brought his iconic "Carpool Karaoke" to New York City's subway with special guests, Sting and Shaggy. However, the passengers on the subway weren't so keen on the idea of Corden and his talented friends interrupting their silent ride with hits like "Every Breath You Take," and "It Wasn't Me." They were probably disappointed due to the fact that they aren't as gifted as Corden, Sting and Shaggy.